

Today's News - Thursday, January 26, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: We'll be breakfasting (very early) with Contract magazine's Interiors Awards winners tomorrow, so there will be no newsletter. We'll be back Monday, Jan. 30.

- Weinstein writes about "Writing about Architecture," Lange's "perspicacious primer": "use it often and you'll never think of the word 'critic' pejoratively again."
- Makower makes the point that sustainable cities are "proving grounds for green technologies, and fertile territory for the burgeoning green economy" (excerpt from the annual State of Green Business report, also included).
- Kimmelman reflects on the similarities between Manhattan's "thriving Penn South" and St. Louis's ill-fated Pruitt-Igoe housing projects: architecturally, the have much in common, but their outcomes were very different.
- An economist examines the results of the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: "the confidence of many economists on the prospects for a lasting economic recovery in the US borders on chutzpah" (Hong Kong, Australia, and the U.K. don't fare much better).
- Chaban x 2: as he tries to make his way through JFK's "incontinent" Terminal 3, he ponders: "How is it that New York wound up with not just one but three of the worst airports in the world? Architecture might be the least of its problems" (a serious - and amusing - read).
- He mediates a debate between critic Goldberger and skyscraper economist Barr re: the Manhattan Skyline: "in the end, it seems they are more in agreement than disagreement."
- Brussat cheers the re-birth of the Providence Arcade topped by 48 micro lofts: "This sort of lifestyle could help downtown lead the city out of the economic slump."
- There's a promising initiative to rescue Moscow's crumbling buildings: offer cheap rent in return for quality restoration - and help the city "reclaim its former glory."
- Q&A with non-profit No Longer Empty folks who are transforming a formerly-forlorn Bronx landmark into a temporary venue for contemporary art.
- Zandberg has two bones to pick: "Somebody is confused about the difference between the green tufts...on the plaza and durable green planning," and the kerfuffle re: the National Library competition (see yesterday's ANN): "the architecture profession might have saved a little of its honor if it had come out against the decision to build a fancy new home for the library, rather than protest the method."
- The Auckland Architecture Association and "boaties" get behind opposition to expansion plans for the Bledisloe Wharf (there go harbor sightlines).
- Azerbaijan announces plans for the world's tallest tower: a 185-story "superscraper" on one of 41 artificial islands in the Caspian Sea (no architect named, but we probably won't be surprised).
- Q&A with Cloepfil re: architecture, design in Portland, NYC's enlightened design excellence programs and development incentives, and so much more.
- 127 organizations in 68 cities named finalists for \$15 million in creative placemaking grants.
- Call for entries (deadline looms): The Unfinished Grid essay competition.
- Weekend diversions:
- Lerner travels through "The Greatest Grid" at MCNY and came away "with a powerful sense of its intelligence and resilience."
- Alsop returns to his controversial ("even the Arts Council has branded it 'not fit for purpose'") The Public arts center with "Will Alsop - A box of delights."
- Inskeep explains in "Instant City" how Karachi "reflects the developing world...a celebration of what cities at their best can be and a study of the unforeseen consequences."
- "The Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang" illustrates "the ambitious, often spectacular - and sometimes odd - structures of North Korea's capital" - with Kim Jong-Il's treatise On Architecture (great pix!).

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Book Review: How to be a Useful Architectural Critic: Alexandra Lange's Perspicacious Primer Points the Way: "Writing about Architecture: Mastering the Language of Buildings and Cities" - use it often and you'll never think of the word "critic" pejoratively again. By Norman Weinstein - ArchNewsNow.com

State of Green Business: Sustainable Cities Take Center Stage: While national governments are struggling with economic and policy gridlocks, cities are become the proving ground for green technologies, and fertile territory for the burgeoning green economy...Leadership examples abound, from Copenhagen to Curitiba. By Joel Makower [link to full report] - GreenBiz

Towers of Dreams: One Ended in Nightmare: The thriving Penn South in Manhattan has much in common architecturally with Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, but its outcome is very different...both classic examples of modern architecture...so-called towers in the park...The lesson these two sites share has to do with the limits of architecture, socially and economically, never mind what some architects and planners promise or boast. By Micahel Kimmelman -- Minoru Yamasaki (1954); Herman Jessor (1962) [images] - New York Times

Sanity is unaffordable: Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey finds that many housing markets in the US are affordable. Hong Kong is the most unaffordable...followed by Australia...Home prices in the UK are still seriously or severely unaffordable...the confidence of many economists on the prospects for a lasting economic recovery in the US borders on chutzpah. By V. Anantha Nageswaran [link to report] - Livemint.com (India)

Terminal Condition: How New York's Airports Crashed and Burned — Can They Soar Again? How is it that New York...wound up with not just one but three of the worst airports in the world? How is it that we have landed in aerial ignominy? Architecture might be the least of New York's problems... By Matt Chaban [slide show] - New York Observer

Paul Goldberger and Skyscraper Economist Jason Barr Debate the Manhattan Skyline: ...in the end, it seems they are more in agreement than disagreement... By Matt Chaban - New York Observer

Reviving the Arcade to revive downtown: Its first-floor shops...will help revive its original appearance of 1828...Perhaps even more important are the planned 48 residential units on the two upper levels. This will be the first major project in Rhode Island featuring micro lofts...Providence is rolling the dice on a young, creative city. This sort of lifestyle could help downtown lead the city out of the economic slump... By David Brussat -- Northeast Collaborative Architects [images] - Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Rent and restore: new life for Moscow's architectural pearls: ...promising initiative...Moscow's crumbling buildings were thrown a lifeline -- cheap rent in return for quality restoration in one of the world's most expensive cities...Red Square and the Kremlin may be top tourist attractions...but by breathing life into the rest of its skyline, the Russian capital may soon reclaim its former glory. [video] - TV-Novosti / RT TV (Russia)

The Andrew Freedman Home is No Longer Empty: The founder and the director of an organization that revitalizes neighborhoods by curating exhibitions in empty spaces discuss their process of transforming a Bronx landmark into a temporary venue for contemporary art. -- Manon Slome; Naomi Hersson-Ringskog [images] - Urban Omnibus

Squaring the circle: Keeping Kikar Hamedina a 'green lung' runs contrary to both contemporary urban planning concepts and social justice...Somebody is confused about the difference between the green tufts of vegetation scattered here and there on the plaza and durable green planning...With regard to the National Library, the architecture profession might have saved a little of its honor if it had come out against the decision to build a fancy new home for the library, rather than protest the method. By Esther Zandberg - Ha'aretz (Israel)

Boaties fear grave effect on harbour: Architects, urban designers and boaties are lining up behind Heart of the City to oppose

[the port company's expansion plans...Images produced by the Auckland Architecture Association show the impact of the view from the port at present and the impact from extending Bledisloe Wharf by 250m in the future. \[slide show\]- New Zealand Herald](#)

[Azerbaijan takes on Burj with plan for world's tallest tower: ...would surpass the Burj Khalifa by 27%...1050m \[185 floors\] superscraper would form part of a chain of 41 artificial islands in the Caspian Sea...at the heart of the Khazar Islands project, to be located 15 miles south of the capital Baku.- ArabianBusiness.com](#)

[Brad Cloepfil: On architecture, design in Portland, and Allied Works Architecture's first creative phase: "Clyfford Still Museum...is the most complete piece of architecture we've done." - The Oregonian](#)

[Finalists Named for \\$15 Million in Creative Placemaking Grants: 127 organizations in 68 cities...chosen for their potential to have a transformative impact on community vibrancy.- ArtPlace](#)

[Call for entries \(deadline reminder\): Call for Essays: The Unfinished Grid: essays that reflect on the Manhattan street grid as paradigm, rubric or muse for urban life; deadline: February 1 - Urban Omnibus](#)

[Mash-up at Right Angles: The 1811 plan mandating an orthogonal street grid helped make Manhattan a paragon of urban form..."The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" reveals both prescience and problems in the grid's rich history...you come away...with a powerful sense of its intelligence and resilience...at the Museum of the City of New York through April 15. By Jonathan Lerner \[images\]- TraceSF \(San Francisco\)](#)

[Will Alsop to return to controversial West Bromwich arts centre The Public which he designed: ...the building he once described as "a box of delights"...However, it sharply divides opinion closer to home and even the Arts Council has branded it "not fit for purpose"..."Will Alsop - A box of delights" January 27 - May 20- Birmingham Mail \(UK\)](#)

[Karachi, Pakistan, as a microcosm for the 21st century city: Steve Inskeep explains in "Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi" how the city...reflects the developing world...a place where the best-laid plans of urban designers and social engineers, including those of Constantino Doxiadis, the Robert Moses of Karachi, tend to be overwhelmed...a celebration of what cities at their best can be and a study of the unforeseen consequences.- Los Angeles Times](#)

[Architecture of Pyongyang revealed in new publication: "The Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang"...provides a guide to the ambitious, often spectacular - and sometimes odd - structures of North Korea's capital...Kim Jong-Il...treatise On Architecture..."Architects must accept and fulfil the leader's plan and determination not as orders and duty but as a matter of pleasure and honour." \[images\]- The Architects' Journal \(UK\)](#)



[Coop Himmelb\(l\)au: Martin Luther Church, Hainburg, Austria](#)

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